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ABSTRACT

Assessment and review are the subjects of this document, one of 9 modules in an 11-unit resource pack designed to help trainers and postsecondary and continuing education staff meet the needs of special needs students in Great Britain. Having completed the module, staff should be able to: (1) use assessment procedures that specify students' special needs and how provision for them will be made; (2) identify and use appropriate sources to make an initial assessment of learning needs; (3) select and use appropriate assessment techniques; (5) develop a self-assessment procedure; (6) consider the appropriateness of achievement to meet special needs; (7) review the awards made by examining and validating organizations in relation to special needs and suggest appropriate modifications; and (8) make final statements of learner achievement. The document covers preadmission assessment, practical features of assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment, continuous assessment and review, validity and reliability, self-assessment, and records of achievement. Seventeen exercises are included. (CML)

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LEARNING SUPPORT

ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW

CE055292

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INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a central feature and an integral part of the education or training process. It can determine admission to courses, it provides feedback on progress, and may lead trainers or teachers to modify their approaches. Assessment may provide a summative statement of achievement which in turn may suggest the next steps in the provision of education or training.

Access to courses is usually based on an initial assessment of the learner's ability. The same admission criteria should apply to all applicants. Judgements about the special needs of some learners should not deny access, but should lead to a specification of the extra support or provision which will be necessary to enable them to participate. Access is then improved by the whole range of support facilities, ranging from modified teaching or training methods and content, or extra guidance sessions, to the provision of special aids such as magnifiers or hearing loops. Access is not limited to the provision of ramps! The principles of assessment are the same for all learners, but the techniques used will require adaptation to meet individual special needs.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is assessment?
- What use is it?
- Why do it?
- How?
- When should we assess?
- What are the similarities and differences in assessing people with special needs?

AIMS

- To enhance knowledge and understanding of assessment.
- To explore the application of assessment techniques for learners with special needs.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this element you should be able to:

- use assessment procedures which enable all potential learners to gain access by specifying their special needs and how provision for them will be made;
- demonstrate an understanding of the purposes of assessment in general and in relation to special needs;
- identify and use appropriate sources to make an initial assessment of learning needs;
- select and use appropriate assessment techniques;
- outline and apply an action plan for assessment;
- develop a self-assessment procedure;
- consider the appropriateness of records of achievement to meet special needs;
- review the awards made by examining and validating bodies in relation to special needs and suggest modifications as appropriate;
- make final statements of learner achievements.

EXERCISES

Exercise 1. Pre-admission information
Exercise 2. Reports
Exercise 3. Application form
Exercise 4. Interviewing
Exercise 5. Initial information
Exercise 6. Norm- and criterion-referenced assessment
Exercise 7. Validity
Exercise 8. Assessment methods

Exercise 9. Choosing the method
Exercise 10. Methods to suit individuals
Exercise 11. Applying an action plan for assessment
Exercise 12. Self-assessment
Exercise 13. Records of achievement
Exercise 14. Qualifications and examination procedures
Exercise 15. Modifying examination procedures
Exercise 16. Policy statements and regulations

ASSESSMENT

KEY QUESTIONS

What is assessment?

It is a process designed to obtain accurate information about learners' performance, potential and attainments, using a wide variety of methods.

It is also an integral part of the planning and implementation of a curriculum/training programme.

What use is it?

- It enables staff to direct potential learners to appropriate courses/training programmes.
- It gives feedback to learners and staff about progress throughout the course/training programme.
- It can provide a lasting record of information about the achievements of learners and their progress during the course/training programme.
- It aids evaluation of the overall course/training programme.

Why do it?

- To give information to learners about their progress.
- To give staff information about learners' progress.
- To enable staff to evaluate the effectiveness of their courses/training programmes.
- Likewise to enable learners to evaluate the programmes.

How?

- By actively involving learners.
- By selecting an appropriate method which is norm-referenced or criterion-referenced.
- By using methods which are reliable and valid.

When?

- Initially, to establish the starting points for learning and teaching/training (formative assessment) throughout the course/training programme.
- Frequently, to obtain regular feedback for learners and tutor/trainers.
- As an integral part of the learning process in which learners are encouraged to assess their own progress.
- At the end of the course/training programme to provide a statement of achievement and progress.

ASSESSING THE PROGRESS OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION/TRAINING NEEDS

What are the similarities in assessment for any learner?

- The **purpose** is the same; you want to find out about the learner's achievements and progress.
- The **processes** of assessment are the same for any group of individuals.
- Assessment and review will be carried out on the same occasions; that is, on entry, to find out current performance level, continuously throughout the programme to determine progress, and at the end to provide a record of achievement and to suggest the next steps.
- The standards or criteria by which you measure performance are the same. The performance tasks may be fewer or different, but the yardstick or standard will remain constant.

What are the differences for learners with special educational/training needs?

- The techniques you use and the tasks set to assess learners normally may be inappropriate for some learners with special educational/training needs. For example a video or audio recording of performance might be more appropriate than a written response. Observation of performance may be more appropriate than discussion or oral questioning for people with communication difficulties.

- The frequency of assessment may be greater. Feedback about progress is essential to both learner and tutor or trainer. For some learners with special needs, progress may be slower. Frequent assessment and feedback can help in identifying and tackling problems as soon as they arise, and help in giving a suitable graduation of tasks.
- Some learners with special needs will have low self-esteem and little self-confidence, often arising from previous lack of success. It is vital for them to see their own progress, thereby giving a sense of accomplishment and providing motivation. Frequent assessment will identify progress and help improve self-image.
- Use a system of recording progress which gives an accurate picture of the learner's achievements. Tasks may need to be broken down into constituent steps or elements of competence to reveal progress. The frequency of assessment affects the working procedures and the size of the steps used in the individual learning/training programme.

PRE-ADMISSION ASSESSMENT

The first hurdle that learners with special needs face is joining the course/training programme. In some cases, individuals are denied access because staff fail to realise how needs may be met appropriately.

You may not, as a teacher or trainer, be directly involved in the pre-admission procedure, but it is important that you know about the processes involved. In YTS, pre-placement assessment will often be undertaken by the careers service, and in some cases young people will have undertaken Initial Training.

The sources of information available to the staff making the pre-admission assessment will include:

- reports;
- application forms;
- interviews;
- information from school leavers' reviews and Initial Training in YTS.

These sources will be examined in the exercises which follow.

●●●● EXERCISE 1. PRE-ADMISSION INFORMATION

Whole group activity

This activity should help you to identify the information which is relevant to the pre-admission stage for learners with special educational/training needs.

Brainstorming exercise.

List the kinds of information you would like to have about the learner with special education/training needs. Refine the list.
(Keep this list available for comparison in the following activities.)

●●● EXERCISE 2. REPORTS

Small group activity

This exercise helps you to consider the nature and value of information available from reports.

The staff members undertaking pre-admission selection will have access to reports from a variety of sources which may include:

- record of achievement
- a statement of special educational needs

- careers officers' reports
- social workers' reports
- probation officers' reports
- youth custody reports
- employment rehabilitation centre reports
- parents' reports
- learner's statement
- YTS Initial Training case conference report
- medical report
- paramedical reports
  - physiotherapy
  - occupational therapy
  - speech therapy
  - audiology
- psychological reports
- psychiatric reports

Step 1. Take the report(s) and ask the following general questions; and note your answers.

- Are the report(s) current? (date)
- What learning needs/problems emerge?
- Are they problems in your setting?
- For whom are they a problem?
- What solutions are suggested?
- What problems/learner needs remain unmet?
- What gap in provision is revealed?
- How can this gap be filled?
- What steps can be taken to achieve access in its widest sense?

Step 2. Take the report(s) and consider the list of information arising from Exercise 1, with reference to it/them. Note your answers.

Step 3. Ask the following specific questions about the report(s) and note your answers.

- What does it tell you about the learner's achievement/competences?
- What does it *not* tell you that you think is important? (Check your list from Exercise 1).
- How will it help you to plan the teaching/training programme?
- Does it only record negative features (disabilities) or does it record positive achievements (abilities)? What implications does this have for the way you view the learner and plan the teaching/training programme?
- What advice does it give you on any additional support/special techniques which may be necessary to assist the learner to learn?

Whole group activity

Each small group should feed back the outcomes of their discussions.

Guidelines for facilitators

You will need to ensure that a variety of reports relevant to your setting are available for this activity. Make sure that you preserve anonymity in any sample you use.

EXERCISE 3. APPLICATION FORM

Small group activity

This exercise is designed to assist you in examining and modifying the application form used at your establishment in order to ensure that it is relevant for all potential trainees or students, including those with special needs.

Obtain copies of your establishment's application form.

Form groups of three or four.

Take your own establishment's application form.

Discuss it critically in relation to your amended list of information requirements stemming from Exercise 1.

Is there any information sought which is irrelevant/unnecessary?

What information has been omitted? How and where can you obtain this information?

Redesign your application form by modifying and supplementing it to make it more relevant and useful for learners with special needs.

What information do you need which can reasonably be provided by the applicant?

What other information do you need? How and where can you obtain it?

(NB. It is good practice to secure the agreement of the learner, and his or her parents if appropriate.)

EXERCISE 4. INTERVIEWING

Small group activity

Interviewing is an important part of the pre-admission assessment procedure and should focus on the negotiation and provision of a suitable education or training programme with adequate support for the special needs of the learner.

It should not be simply a selection or rejection process. It should identify the extra requirements of the trainees or students and respond accordingly. This also implies the preparedness to make a decision that any particular programme is not the most suitable for a learner and this should activate a guidance/counselling process which results in a suitable placement.

SIGNPOST
Element 8, **Guidance and Advice**

This exercise will help you consider the factors necessary for a successful pre-selection interview. Many of the principles will apply to other less formal 'interviews' with learners which occur during everyday teaching/training.

Form groups of three, four or five.

Step 1. Discuss and list the factors which you consider to be important in conducting a successful interview.

Step 2. Either choose a learner who you have interviewed recently in relation to his/her application for your course/training programme;

or select one of the case-study characters from the **Resources Section** at the end of the pack.

Summarise the information available to you prior to the interview, in no more than five or six short statements.

Step 3. Devise an interview procedure which meets with requirements you listed in Step 1.

Step 4. Check your interview procedure by asking the following questions. Make any necessary amendments.

- What information do you hope to obtain from the interview?
- How have you structured the interview to obtain that information?

- Who will be present at the interview: staff, applicant, or applicant with parent or representative?
- How have you made them feel at ease and relaxed?
- What type of questions have you used? Do they include predominantly open-ended questions/probes/closed questions? Why did you choose these questions?
- Did you consider the language used, e.g. is it simple, ambiguous, long-winded?
- Have you considered leaving enough time for applicants to answer, allowing for silences?
- How much time has been allocated to the interviewer, the applicant, his/her parents or representatives? Is the balance correct?
- Have you made allowances for finding out about the best mode of communication with the applicant? What alternative to verbal communication might be appropriate?
- Have you thoroughly investigated the extra support or provision which may be necessary for meeting the applicant's special education/training needs? Have you answers for how this will be made available? If not, what action will you take?
- Have you considered the interview environment, e.g. room layout?
- How will you record the information obtained from the interview? What options are there?
- Have you considered the confidentiality of the information gained? To whom should it be made available?

Whole group activity

Feed back the outcomes of each of the small group discussions. From these draw up a list of general guidelines for pre-admission interviews.

Consider together the adequacy of pre-admission information and interview procedures as a basis of decision for course/programme entry. What alternatives may be suitable? How can these be given effect in your place of work?

PRACTICAL FEATURES OF ASSESSMENT

- Assessment should generally be task orientated. It is not necessary to administer 'a special test'. The assessment should arise from the stated learning outcomes/competences.
- The procedure must be compatible with the performance criteria and conditions stated in the programme.
- It should provide feedback without delay.
- It should provide *specific* information that helps answer the questions posed, not general feedback.
- It should ensure that outcomes of assessment contribute to improved future performance and lead to modification in instruction, conditions and criteria.
- It should motivate and encourage learners, not destroy their confidence.
- It should allow learners to work at their own pace.
- It should record small steps in progress to aid confidence building and increase motivation.
- It should be realistic and achievable.
- It should offer appropriate pathways to accreditation.
- It should encourage learners to be involved in their own assessment.
- It should be an integral part of the teaching/training process.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

At the start of each new course or training programme, you will need to find out about the abilities, attainments and difficulties of the trainees or students. It will form an integral part of the development of an individual programme or individual training plan. There is some evidence that all relevant staff should be involved at the pre-admission and initial assessment stages so that a suitable learning or training programme can be devised at the outset. It is important to guard against intimidating the applicant by subjecting him or her to a massive interview panel and battery of assessment procedures, but with careful scheduling a happy medium may be struck.

SIGNPOST

Element 3. **Devising Individual Learning Programmes**, considers this issue in detail.

As a teacher or trainer, you will be able to use the information made available to you from other sources, but you will still need to carry out your own assessments which are related specifically to the part of the course or training programme with which you are concerned.

EXERCISE 5. INITIAL INFORMATION

Small group activity

This exercise will enable you to consider the **specific** information which you need to know about your trainees or students. It will provide an opportunity to devise or review your own initial assessment schedule, and the activities or tasks necessary to provide you with the appropriate information.

Form small groups of three or four. It is preferable for you to work in course teams or in groups of staff concerned with the delivery of the same or similar programmes.

Step 1

Discuss and list the information you need about your learners at the beginning of your course or training programme.

Check that you have considered all of the following:

- existing capabilities
- previous experience
- levels of achievement
- aptitude
- interests
- areas requiring extra help
- special aids, adaptations or support required

Step 2

Either devise an appropriate initial assessment schedule or profile for your course or training programme;

or consider and discuss the initial assessment schedule or profile you use at present.

Check whether it gives you all the information you identified in Step 1. Make any necessary alterations.

Step 3

Devise a series of introductory activities or tasks which will enable you to obtain the information you need. This should provide your learners with an introduction to the kinds of practical activities they will be undertaking during the course or training programme.

NB. You may want to return to Steps 2 and 3 again having considered the different methods of assessment outlined later in this element.

Check that you have considered the following:

- How will you involve the learners in discussing and recording the outcomes?
- How will you find out more about any special education or training needs which are revealed:
  - through discussion?
  - supplementary activities?
  - what form will they take?

FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Assessment of learners should take place both during the course/training programme to monitor progress, and at the end to summarise achievements.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- Can give feedback information on progress to the learner;
- can be used to identify areas of performance which need more work;
- helps to identify difficulties in learning;
- provides feedback to the teacher or trainer of the learner's progress and the starting points for teaching/training;
- should be built into learning materials and used throughout the learning process.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- Can provide final judgements about achievements;
- is made at the completion of a course module, not just at the end of a whole course or programme;
- should be recorded and the results stored;
- can be used for certification purposes;
- should also be built into the learning process.

The same outline can be used for either formative or summative assessment. The process for devising your own assessments will be covered later in this element.

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW

The continuous cycle of assessment, teaching or training, reassessment of progress, if unsatisfactory modification of teaching or training, then reassessment of progress, is one that you will be familiar with. It illustrates the way in which assessment forms an integral part of any teaching or training process. It also shows that assessment should lead to constant reappraisal and modification of teaching and training. In this way, all staff will be involved in the assessment process in their everyday teaching or training.

At various points throughout the course or training programme, there will be a systematic review of progress. In YTS a review of progress is planned for the end of the induction period, to involve trainees in the decisions about their training arrangements. This review should be based on the assessments made during the induction and initial evaluation processes and should result in an individual training plan. Those involved in the review group should include the trainees and external agencies such as the careers service and managing agents. The second main review in YTS occurs at the end of the training environment phase. This review takes the form of a case conference with internal and external agencies attending as appropriate, and should result in a review of the achievement of objectives and of the route. This will be expressed as a record of achievement and a specification of further need.

EXERCISE 6. NORM- OR CRITERION-REFERENCED ASSESSMENT

Individual activity

The purpose of this exercise is to help you to recognise examples of norm- and criterion-referenced assessment in practice.

Norm-referenced assessment compares the performances of individual students with each other. Most public examinations are norm-referenced and a set percentage of students will fail.

Criterion-referenced assessment involves setting an exact criterion or standard by which performance can be judged within a specified context. All students can pass if their performance is acceptable and meets the criterion or criteria.

Decide which of the following examples are norm-referenced and which are criterion-referenced approaches.

Add three other examples from your own practice.

1. A learner with a physical impairment improves his typing speed from 15 to 23 words per minute. The goal is 25 words per minute speed.
2. A learner with partial hearing will undertake an external examination consisting of course work, a project and a written examination. She or he will need to obtain the minimum pass mark in each part of the examination.
3. A learner with severe learning difficulties has passed an intermediate level swimming examination.
4. As a part of the final examination, a catering scheme learner is required to produce a nutritionally balanced, low salt, low calorie snack lunch.
5. A visually impaired learner will, by special arrangement, dictate answers to two written papers set by CGLI.
6. A learner who uses a wheelchair is assessed by observation of practical skills and the use of a check-list which is ticked. The skills are demonstrated to the required standard.
7. You notice in an applicant's report that she has an IQ score of 113 on the WISC.
8.
9.
10.

●●●●

Whole group activity

Discuss your answers, including the final three individual examples. You may find it useful to check your conclusions with the following:

1. Criterion-referenced assessment
   The criterion for achievement is 25 words per minute. The performance is compared with previous performance and the criterion for success rather than with other people.
2. Norm-referenced assessment
   This is an example of an externally set examination, with a set pass mark, in which the examinees are marked against each other.
3. Criterion-referenced assessment
   The criteria for this level of examination have been achieved.
4. Criterion-referenced assessment
   The criteria for performance are stated. This can be used as a part of a summative record.
5. Norm-referenced assessment
   This is an externally set examination although the arrangements have been modified to meet special needs.

6. Criterion-referenced assessment
   The teacher or trainer would need to assess performance against the criteria on the check-list. If all items have been ticked, the record may provide a part of the summative record. Any skills which are lacking will be identified and may form the basis of the teaching or training environment. This contributes to formative assessment.
7. Norm-referenced assessment
   The score compares this applicant to everyone else.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity is the test of whether or not an assessment procedure measures what it is supposed to measure. Some assessment procedures, such as written examinations, may be just as much a test of memory and written communication skills, as a measure of the knowledge and skills which they seek to measure.

Reliability is the extent to which the outcomes of assessment remain the same when repeated on the same person on separate occasions or when carried out by different people by or with the same person.

●●● EXERCISE 7. VALIDITY

Small group activity

The purpose of this exercise is to enable you to consider whether your own assessment procedures or examinations have validity.

Advance preparation

You will need to ensure that participants are prepared to bring examples of their own assessment procedures.

Methods

Form small groups.

Take each of your assessment procedures or examinations and answer the questions below.

List the features the procedure seeks to assess.

List the *other skills* necessary in order to do so.
For example:

- memory
- reading
- writing
- listening

If you find that your procedures are very dependent on other skills, rewrite them to reduce this dependency.

●●●● EXERCISE 8. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Whole group activity

These activities seek to help you to explore the range of possible methods of assessment.

Brainstorm the many possible methods of assessment.

Refine your list.

You may wish to compare your list with this one. It was produced by one group of people in response to this activity.

- observations
- progress sheets

- practical tests
- check-lists
- making something
- diaries
- demonstrating (doing something)
- log books (doing something)
- video recordings
- written exercises
- audio recordings
- projects
- role-plays
- discussions
- simulations
- computer-assessed tests
- multiple choice tests
- oral questioning
- self-assessment

● ● ● EXERCISE 9. CHOOSING THE METHOD

Small group activity

The method you choose depends on:

- the nature of the task;
- the characteristics of the learner.

This exercise enables you to consider the choice of appropriate methods of assessment.

Form small groups.

List as many methods of assessing the following learning outcomes as possible.

Identify the method(s) which you feel to be the most appropriate.

1. Can change a tyre correctly.
2. Can ask relevant questions to elicit information.
3. Can explain the need for computer security.
4. Can show how formal and informal procedure are used by groups to conduct their business and achieve their purposes.
5. Can roll hair on curlers of the right size, in correct direction.
6. Can work co-operatively in group tasks.
7. Can connect up and prepare a simple microcomputer system for use.
8. Can express own feelings creatively through a chosen expressive medium.
9. Can use tools and equipment to standards required for safety and efficiency.
10. Can devise a plan for problem solving, identifying and accounting for possible constraint.
11. Can express a view on some creative purpose of specified art forms.
12. Can select relevant information for a particular purpose from 'face-to-face' situations.
13. Can understand the management of personal finance.
14. Can gather information on a range of job opportunities.
15. Can construct a simple wiring circuit with two bulbs and a double switching device.

EXERCISE 10. METHODS TO SUIT INDIVIDUALS

Small group activity

This exercise is designed to enable you to consider the most appropriate methods of assessment for some individual learners.

You will need the materials from Exercise 9. This should include your list of possible and preferred methods for assessment.

Form small groups.

Each group should select four or five of the case-studies.

Select some of the learning outcomes which could be applicable to each character.

Choose the most appropriate assessment methods for each example.

Describe any modifications you may need to make to the assessment procedure.

Each group should feed back the outcomes of their discussions. A list of possible modifications should be drawn up.

Whole group activity

EXERCISE 11. A CHECK-LIST FOR ASSESSMENT

Individual activity

Define learning outcomes

- What are the main aims of the course training programme?
- What are you trying to achieve?

List the objectives involved

- What knowledge and skills are involved?
- To which competences and outcomes do they relate?
- Do they relate specifically to the content or are they general, relating to the learning process and how the learner approaches the work?

Identify the learning situations

- What learning/training activities can you provide?
- What will the learner do?

Identify targets

- What constitutes evidence of progress?
- What are the precise criteria for each task?
- Are you concerned with the process or the finished product?

Selecting assessment method

- How will you assess performance?
- Will the methods differ for each task/each learner?
- How?

Recording outcomes of assessment

- How will you do this?
- Will the system be manageable?
- Will it be easy to use?
- Will they be used for certification?
- Do they fulfil your requirements of assessment?

EXERCISE 12: IMPLEMENTING AN ACTION PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT

Small group activity

This exercise provides you with an opportunity to apply this action plan in practice. It enables you to consider your own assessment procedures.

Advance preparation

You will need to ensure that participants have a copy of the check-list and bring copies of their course outline or training programme with them. You may prefer to provide these yourself.

Methods

Form small groups. You may find this exercise easier if you work with colleagues who are members of the same course teams or who work on the same aspect of a training programme.

Take your course outline or training programme.

Carry out the action plan for assessment by answering the questions related to each stage.

Choose two or three of the case-studies from the Resources Section;

or identify a learner with special needs and with whom you have worked. Specify the modifications you made in order to meet his/her individual needs.

Describe any modifications you would need to make in order to meet the special needs of the individual concerned.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

This is a useful strategy for a number of reasons:

- It can improve communications and understanding between learner and teacher or trainer.
- Learners may be more motivated because they are actively involved in assessments.
- It provides a good way of checking the learner's view of his/her progress and attitude to the course/training programme.
- It can provide the tutor or trainer with information about the learner's special needs and with feedback on the effectiveness of the programme in meeting them.
- It can provide opportunities for advice and guidance through negotiation and discussion.

The approach selected for self-assessment depends on the purposes you wish it to fulfil. The learner will be required to:

- reflect on his or her own performance and reactions to it;
- give feedback to the tutor or trainer about the above;
- contribute to decision making in the assessment process;
- learn to make judgements about quality;
- develop an awareness of his or her performance in relation to the norm.

Successful self-assessment depends on a number of important factors:

- You must give the learner clear guidelines for self-assessment.
- Lecturers or trainers need time to develop skills in self-assessment.
- It is preferable for self-assessment to occur several times during a programme, but it will lose impact if used too frequently.
- It can be time consuming so needs to be carefully planned.
- Self-assessment may provide the basis of a summative record, but it *must* be supported by dialogue and negotiation between learner and tutor or trainer.

Suitable techniques include:

- a record of dialogue between learner and tutor or trainer, which is used as a prompt;

- the use of 'stimulus' or 'trigger' questions such as:
  I had most difficulty with...
  I still need to work on...
  The easiest parts are...
- Use of questionnaires, multiple choice or requiring comments. These can be written or on tape, as appropriate.

EXERCISE 13. SELF-ASSESSMENT

Individual activity

This exercise will enable you to develop a self-assessment procedure for use on your course or training programme.

Select one exercise, assignment or task, which is a part of your course or training programme.

Design a self-assessment format, sheet or form which may be used by your trainees or students to assess their own performance of the task identified above.

Identify ways in which this could be modified for use by learners with special needs.

Small group activity

Form small groups and discuss your self-assessment formats, sheets or forms. Make a list of the features which you have identified as important in devising a successful self-assessment procedure. List all possible modifications which may be made for learners with special needs.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Summative assessment should provide both a statement of achievements and suggest future provision. This may be expressed in terms of a specification of further needs and appropriate opportunities for progression.

Some forms of summative assessment are closely linked with accreditation and certification. YTS requires all trainees including those with special training needs to have opportunities to acquire vocational qualifications or credits towards one. The problem arising relates to the availability of appropriate qualifications to offer. All YTS trainees must receive certification detailing the main elements of their training programme and charting their progress. The advantages of credit accumulation, in which failures are not recorded, can be particularly pertinent to some learner with special needs.

For some learners with special needs the format of many existing qualifications denies access because the bottom rungs of ladders of competence and skills are out of reach. Rather than denying these people access to qualifications or altering the standards and thereby devaluing the meaning of the qualification, a modular approach to qualifications has been proposed. This modular approach allows credits for small blocks of achievements or elements of competence contributing to units of competence rather than whole job competence.

Records of achievement are often used to show progress towards objectives. They provide a clear, flexible, individualised statement of the learner's performance on set criteria, during the course/training programme. This is a sound general approach in both education and training and is particularly appropriate for learners with special needs.

Whatever the outcome in terms of certification or records of achievement, summative assessment should provide the 'ticket' for the next stage in the journey. This may be to further education or training opportunities or to employment.

RECORDS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Records of achievement are useful in a number of ways. They

- give a positive emphasis to recording success;
- give a clear picture of exactly what the learner can do, under given conditions;
- encourage greater involvement of the trainee or student in the assessment and recording process;
- give motivation.

● ● ● EXERCISE 14. RECORDS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Small group activity

This exercise enables you to consider and modify records of achievement so that they can cater for all learners including those with special needs.

Advance preparation

You will need to obtain examples of records of achievement in current usage, such as LEA, YTS, RSA, Voc.Prep, CPVE, and the records currently in use by the participants.

Methods

Form small groups. Discuss your own record of achievement and any others which may have been provided, by answering the following questions.

What is its main purpose:

- to provide evidence for summative assessment and certification?
- to help structure the learner's experience?
- to provide a basis for review of learning and progress by learner and teacher or trainer?

How exactly is it intended to be used?

- Who fills it in?
- When?
- What sort of information is required?
- Who determined the assessment process?

Is it linked to any other form or method of assessment?

- Is a check-list included?
- Are levels/standards included? If so, how?

Would this record of achievement serve its purpose?

- Will it record the learner's real achievements?
- What will be the likely outcomes?
- Are entries dated?

Would this record cater for learners with special educational/training needs?

- Can it be used flexibly?
- Will the statements be achievable by learners with special needs?
- If not, how could they be modified?
- Will it lead to progression to further appropriate education, training or employment?

What improvements, additions or modifications would you suggest?

How will the information be presented?

- As a certificate of attendance or achievement?
- Will it be graded or be a statement of competence?
- Will it bear an endorsement if a modified assessment procedure has been used?

What status or authority will it carry?

- Will it be transferable?
- Will it have national recognition?
- Will it be recognised by employers locally or nationally?
- Could it be an inhibiting factor? (Does it focus on the individual's need and what she or he *cannot* do?)

● ● ● EXERCISE 15. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Small group activity

This activity enables you to consider the awards made by the major examining and validating bodies, including those used on your course or training programme, in relation to learners with special needs.

Advance preparation

Participants should be asked to bring examples used on their course or you will need to collect and have available examples of awards from examining and validating bodies. Examples include CGLI, RSA, BTEC, NCVQ.

Methods

Form small groups. You may find it easier to work in groups concerned with the same qualifications.

Discuss the following questions from the point of view of two case-study characters from the **Resources Section**.

Is a suitable 'off the shelf' award available? If so:

- Does it require modification or adaptation to suit the need of the individual?
- Whose responsibility is the modification? How can it best be secured?
- What constraints could not be overcome, e.g. legislation, industry led standards?

● ● ● EXERCISE 16. MODIFYING EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Small group activity

This activity provides you with the opportunity to consider how examination and assessment procedures may be modified to meet the special education or training needs of some learners.

Form small groups and list as many examples as you can of modified examination or assessment procedures.

Here are some examples to start your list:

- a student with severe emotional difficulties who is taught off site and sits the examination in the teacher's own home;
- the use of an interpreter for a pre-lingually deaf person;
- the use of braille for a visually impaired trainee or student;
- extra time and special moderation for a trainee with specific learning difficulties (with particular literacy problems).

Check whether your list includes suggestions which could accommodate the special needs of the case-study characters and any learners you work with.

Will standard assessment/examination procedures be used? If so:

- Is the liaison between the teaching/training staff and the administrative staff at the examining centres adequate?

- If not, how can it be improved?
- What special arrangements are made for learners with special needs, e.g. amanuensis, extra time, alternative presentation of 'paper'?
- Are they appropriate?
- Do they isolate candidates unnecessarily?
- Could they be a distraction to other candidates?
- Are appropriate facilities available, e.g. adapted or extended keyboards?

Whole group activity

Each group should feed back their suggestions to form a summary list of possible modifications. You should contact the examining body to check what may be permissible for your own learners, noting that it may still be necessary to seek specific approval to vary any general access requirements. Always seek this in good time.

EXERCISE 17. POLICY STATEMENTS AND REGULATIONS

Small group activity

This activity will help you to review and take action to ensure that policy statements and regulations are appropriate and reflect good practice.

Advance preparation

Obtain policy statements and regulations from each examining, awarding or validating body, appropriate to the participants' work with people with special needs. You may prefer each small group to consider the regulations of one body.

Methods

Form small groups.

List those features of particular relevance to learners with special needs and discuss the policy statement critically.

Draw up a model for good practice.

Use this model of good practice to reappraise the policy statement. List your proposed modifications.

Identify those within the examining bodies who have responsibility for this area. You may wish to feed back the outcomes of your discussions to them.

Whole group activity

Each group should feed back the outcomes of their discussions and an overall model of good practice should be drawn up.

SUMMARY

EVALUATION CHECK-LIST

Can you:

- identify the information which you need to know about a potential learner with special needs, at the pre-admission stage?
- critically consider the value of information derived from reports?
- devise or modify an application form to obtain relevant information from applicants with special education or training needs?
- devise and carry out successfully a pre-selection interview?
- devise or review your own initial assessment schedule, and the activities or tasks necessary to provide you with the appropriate information?
- recognise and use norm- and criterion-referenced assessments?
- consider the validity and reliability of assessment procedures?
- identify a range of assessment methods and select appropriate ones to suit individual needs?
- outline and apply an action plan for assessment?
- develop a self-assessment procedure?
- consider the appropriateness of records of achievement to meet special education or training needs, and modify them accordingly?
- review the awards made by the major examining and validating bodies in relation to special needs?
- suggest modifications to examination and assessment procedures in order to meet special needs?
- critically review the policy statements and regulations of the major examination and validating bodies? Propose suitable amendments as appropriate?

SIGNPOSTS

Links to other elements include the following:

SIGNPOST

Element 8, **Guidance and Support**, considers the interpersonal skills necessary for conducting successful interviews.

SIGNPOST

Element 6, **Design and Adaptation of Learning Materials** – Section on Initial Assessment.

TRAINING AGENCY

Skill
NATIONAL BUREAU FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES